REMARKS

Claims 15, 16, 19 and 32-41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for purportedly being unpatentable over Stanglemaier et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,732,507) in view of Stroia et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,745,560) and Liu et al. (U.S. 6,964,156). Applicants disagree.

Liu et al. is cited in the Office Action for disclosing that it is, purportedly, conventional in the art to arrange an EGR line (43) downstream of the reformer and the reformate is supplied to the engine via the EGR line to improve an engine operation and to reduce harmful emissions in an exhaust gas stream. However, Liu et al. is not prior art to this application as discussed below.

This application is a national stage entry of PCT/EP2004/001824 and claims foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. §119(a)-(d) or (f) to German application no. DE 103 15 593.7, filed April 5, 2003, the priority of which is acknowledged in the Office Action. April 5, 2003 precedes the priority date of Liu et al., i.e. October 23, 2003. As such, Liu et al. is not prior art to the current invention. Enclosed herewith is a translation of PCT/EP2004/001824 with a Verification of Translation certifying that the translation of the PCT/EP2004/001824 is accurate. Applicants state that PCT/EP2004/001824 and German application no. DE 103 15 593.7 are identical and therefore the certified translation of the PCT application is also an certified accurate translation of DE 103 15 593.7.

The combination of Stanglemaier et al. and Stroia et al. fail to teach or suggest the invention as claimed. Neither reference teaches or suggests an exhaust gas recirculation arranged downstream of the reforming unit: Nor do they teach or suggest supplying reformate to the engine by way of a exhaust gas recirculation. Thus, the combination of cited references fails to render the invention as claimed obvious.

Applicants request that the Office reconsider and withdraw the rejection of Claims 15, 16, 19 and 32-41 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claims 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for purportedly being unpatentable over Stanglemaier et al., in view of Stroia et al. and Liu et al., as applied to claims 16 and 15 and further in view of Murachi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,746,989). Applicants disagree.

Liu et al. is not prior art to the present application, as discussed above, and the combination of Stanglemaier et al., Stroia et al. and Murachi et al. fails to teach or suggest the invention as claimed.

The combination of Stanglmaier et al. and Stroia fails to teach or suggest an exhaust gas recirculation arranged downstream of the reforming unit and thus fail to render the invention as claimed obvious. Murachi et al. does not compensate for the deficiencies of Stanglmaier et al. and Stroia et al. because Murachi et al. also fails to teach or suggest an exhaust gas recirculation arranged downstream of the reforming unit. Therefore the combination of Stanglmaier et al., Stroia et al. and Murachi et al. fails to teach or suggest the invention as claimed and fails to render the invention as claimed obvious. Applicants request that the Office reconsider and withdraw the rejection of Claims 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Applicants submit that this application is now in condition for allowance. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket # 095309.56876US).

Respectfully submitted,

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